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THE CONSPIRACY THEORY OF TERRORISM:

ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION

David Raymond Beecroft  
B.A., Oregon College of Education, Monmouth

THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of  
the requirements for the degree of

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in

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THE CONSPIRACY THEORY OF TERRORISM:  
ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION

A Thesis

by

David Raymond Beecroft

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10 June 1966  
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Department of Chemical Engineering

Abstract  
of  
THE CONSPIRACY THEORY OF TERRORISM:  
ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION  
by  
David Raymond Beecroft

Statement of Problem

The conspiracy theory of terrorism is one of many theories which attempt to explain terrorism. The literature relating to conspiracy theory is fragmented and opinionated, causing problems in understanding the positions of those who attest to conspiracy theory. This thesis consolidates much of the literature and relates the impact of conspiracy theory ideology to the political decision-making process.

Sources of Data

This study analyzes literature from the two opposing viewpoints of the conspiracy theory of terrorism. The data is obtained primarily through books, journals, magazines, newspaper articles, and government documents.

Conclusions Reached

The opposing viewpoints of conspiracy theory are both supported in the literature. Terrorism has become a source of power in politics. There are many similarities in the decision-making processes used by the two sides. The conspiracy theory of terrorism may or may not be valid, but it has contributed to the beliefs and actions of many governments and people in powerful decision-making roles.

Committee Chair's Signature of Approval

Thomas J. Kelly

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My interest has always been in the field of criminal justice and there are many people who share my concerns about terrorism. Although I have been involved with anti-terrorist security and I have personally witnessed the effects of terrorism, I would not have been able to complete this thesis without the help and support of several individuals.

Dr. Thomas Phelps has been dedicated to the field of criminal justice and terrorism research for many years. His guidance and support have been invaluable to me. He gave me the freedom to explore and the constraints to get the work done. I not only consider Dr. Phelps an expert in his field, but I consider him a valued friend.

Dr. James Poland served as the reader for my thesis and was instrumental in providing me with the guidance to complete the thesis in the proper format. His expertise in of terrorism served as a motivational factor for the choice of topics.

I would especially like to acknowledge my family for their support and understanding. This year has been a very special year for us and I thank you, Linda, Mason, Matthew, and Lindsay for making my work worthwhile.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the men and women of the United States Air Force Security Police who must face terrorism daily and who have felt the painful effects of terrorism. They do their jobs so well and with so little thanks that it makes me proud to be one of them.

One incident deserves notice. Following two weeks of unloading caskets, transporting injured Marines, performing honor guard duties, and helping process the remains of the victims of the bombing of the Marine compound in Beirut, I talked with a young Security Police airman who had volunteered to work extra during this crisis. He related to me this incident. He told me that as he looked into the cold eyes of one of the fallen Marines, he felt the pain of death and started to cry. He then said he looked into the eyes again and saw a dedication and peacefulness that made him swell with pride. He whispered to the corpse, "Thank you. I know you were doing your job well." It is to this airman, and thousands just like him, to whom I dedicate this thesis. I just hope that someday the realities of life will not be found in the realities of death caused by terrorism.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

BE NOT AFRAID OF SUDDEN TERROR!  
Proverbs 3:25

In today's world, the Biblical verse is not easy to follow or understand. Sudden terror has become a phenomenon that has captivated the world. Although some societies are more likely to experience the horrors of terrorism than others,<sup>1</sup> it remains an enigma to the entire world. The history of terrorism can be traced back to before the birth of Christ, however, the criminal justice field has only recently become actively involved in attempting to understand terrorism. Thus far, no one has been able to control terrorism, not the psychologists, sociologists, politicians, peace-makers, capitalists, communists, or the criminologists. According to a 1984 Rand Corporation report, "despite increasing government success in combatting terrorists, the total volume of terrorist activity worldwide has increased during the last ten years."<sup>2</sup> There are many reasons for the numerous unsuccessful attempts to control terrorism. They rest in the varied beliefs, theories, interpretations, and ideologies expoused by the various entities. Many of these beliefs are not based upon facts.

Terrorism, like many other subjects, can relate to an enormous wealth of facts. For example, minimal research can reveal the number of terrorist incidents reported through FBI sources, the number of people killed or injured in terrorist bombings according to CIA studies, and very specific information concerning the organization, leadership, and methods of operation of individual terrorist groups can be easily obtained. This information, although subject to interpretation, is important to relating to how terrorists behave, but they don't address the question "why?". According to one criminologist, Cecil L. Willis, in the criminal justice field, "a wealth of facts has been collected, but theory has been given a secondary role."<sup>3</sup>

Alex P. Schmid relates a basic problem in researching terrorism. Schmid notes:

The newcomer to the field of terrorism research has to find his way with little to guide him. There is no clear and generally accepted definition of what constitutes terrorism to begin with. Its relationship to other concepts like political violence, guerrilla warfare, political assassination, etc. is insufficiently clarified. The theories which attempt to explain the occurrence of state terrorism or the rise of insurgent terrorism are widely dispersed.<sup>4</sup>

There is a void in the study of terrorism relating to the various theories which attempt to explain terrorism. It appears that many of the attempts to explain terrorism are based primarily upon the availability of empirical data which

is subject to numerous fallacies. Theory is an important ingredient in the quest to understanding and controlling terrorism. Theory development is critical to understanding any problem. Failure to develop theory will ensure continued ambiguity. As criminal justice practitioners, caution should be taken to avoid being "more concerned with measurement itself than with speculation about the substance being measured."<sup>5</sup> This thesis is an attempt to understand a particular theory of terrorism and its utility. The theory is the conspiracy theory of terrorism.

#### Statement of Problem

A review of the current literature on the conspiracy theory of terrorism reveals that there exists conflicting information for analyzing this theory. Alex P. Schmid indicates "terrorism...seems to lend itself particularly well to conspiracy theories."<sup>6</sup> The problem is conspiracy theories have evolved over the years as one of many theories seeking to explain terrorism and the information relating to conspiracy theories is fragmented and opinionated. The literature relating to conspiracy theory of terrorism needs to be consolidated and the anticipated political decisions of the theory proponents need to be reviewed.

#### Need for Study

There are thousands of books, articles and studies

relating to the field of terrorism. The conspiracy theory of terrorism is only one of the many theories which seek to explain terrorism. If the motives of the authors and experts in this area can be understood, it will help in the search to understand the phenomenon of terrorism. This research needs to be conducted to consolidate the various interpretations of conspiracy theories of terrorism to better understand the problem and to anticipate possible reactions. A study of the conspiracy theory of terrorism is important because it will help to clarify the efforts to explain terrorism, it will provide a basis for evaluating past, present, and future attempts to combat terrorism, and it will suggest possible impacts on the policy-making efforts relating to terrorism.

#### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to present a current descriptive analysis of the conspiracy theories of terrorism. The hypothetical impacts of the conflicting views will be analyzed to provide projected results of political decision-making based upon conspiracy theories of terrorism. The potential impact will be examined through a case study. A natural derivative of the study will be to provide concise information to the criminologist in the attempt to understand how conspiracy theory relates to practice and politics.

### Scope and Limitations of Study

The scope of this study is intended primarily to encompass an extensive review of the literature relating to the specified intent of the study. The study will examine the primary sources of the two opposing views of the conspiracy theory of terrorism and attempt to relate the theory to practice in a case study.

The limitations of the study are both the availability and absence of literature. There is substantially more literature available in the United States relating to the Soviet Conspiracy Theory. Although some literature does exist in the U.S. referring to the American Conspiracy theory, it is not as voluminous nor as widely acclaimed. The literature proclaiming the American Conspiracy Theory is undoubtedly available in the Communist bloc countries. This study is also limited to projecting the conspiracy theories of terrorism and it neglects the validity or invalidity of the other theories.

### Definition of Terms

One of the first problems encountered in the study of terrorism is to define the terms. "Everyone who writes on the topic of terrorism struggles at one time or another with the problem of definition."<sup>7</sup> Grant Wardlaw, a research criminologist from the Australian Institute of Criminology, explains:

Because terrorism engenders such extreme emotions, partly as a reaction to the horrors associated with it and partly because of its ideological context, the search for a meaningful analytical agreement from all participants in the debate is fraught with difficulty.<sup>8</sup>

The following definitions are not meant to be "the" accepted definitions. They are merely those definitions which are fit the context of this particular study.

### 1. Conspiracy Theory

A definition of conspiracy theory was not located in the course of study. The definition provided reflects the opinion and creation of the author.

Conspiracy theory is defined as an attempt to explain the existence of terrorism based upon the concerted direct or indirect efforts of two or more actors to achieve political goals, which may themselves differ, whereby one actor is engaged in a variety of support activities and the other actor conducts terrorist activities. The primary supporting actors are governmental and the conductor of activities may be other governments, groups or individuals.

### 2. Political Ideology

Political ideology is "a cultural and mental complex which mediates between the norms associated with given social attitudes and conduct and the norms which political institutions and mechanisms tend to crystallize and propagate. In other terms, political ideology is a more or less integrated system of values and norms, rooted in society, which individuals and groups project...to promote the aspirations and ideals that have come to value in life."<sup>9</sup>

### 3. Terrorism

In his book Political Terrorism: A Research Guide to Concepts, Theories, Data Bases and Literature, Alex P. Schmid provides a lengthy, but complete, definition of terrorism.

Schmid defines terrorism in this way:

Terrorism is a method of combat in which random or symbolic victims serve as instrumental target of violence. These instrumental victims share group or class characteristics which form the basis for their selection for victimization. Through previous use of violence or the credible threat of violence other members of that group or class are put in a state of chronic fear (terror). This group or class, whose members' sense of security is purposively undermined, is the target of terror. The victimization of the target of violence is considered extranormal by most observers from the witnessing audience on the basis of its atrocity; the time (e.g. peacetime) or the place (not a battlefield) of victimization or the disregard for rules of combat accepted in conventional warfare. The norm violation creates an attentive audience beyond the target of terror; sectors of this audience might in turn form the main object of manipulation. The purpose of this indirect method of combat is either to immobilize the target of terror in secondary targets of demand (e.g. a government) or targets of attention (e.g. public opinion) to changes of attitude or behaviour favouring the short or long-term interests of the users of this method of combat.<sup>10</sup>

This definition provides the basis for understanding many of the concepts associated with terrorism. It addresses violence, terror, fear, demands, and attention in a way which makes them significant to the overall concept.

### 4. Viewpoint "A"

Viewpoint "A" of the conspiracy theory of terrorism is

the viewpoint which expouses the involvement of the American government, the Central Intelligence Agency, and elite business interests in sponsoring and supporting terrorism throughout the world.

#### 5. Viewpoint "B"

Viewpoint "B" of the conspiracy theory of terrorism is the viewpoint which expouses the involvement of the Soviet Union, the KGB, and the Communist surrogates in sponsoring and supporting terrorism.

#### Methodology

This study is based primarily upon a descriptive analysis of the conspiracy theory of terrorism. The descriptive analysis is conducted from the available research material in journals, books, newspapers, previous studies, government documents, and practical work experience in the field of anti-terrorism training and security.

The material was obtained and each source was reviewed and classified according to subject content and ideology. The criteria for classification related to the two conflicting viewpoints. The descriptive analysis was projected into previous work in criminal justice policy-making conducted by Walter B. Miller to attempt to ascertain relationships in the political decision-making process. The conspiracy theory of terrorism was reviewed through the use



of a case study of the April 1986 Libyan bombing incident in retaliation for alleged terrorist support. The use of a case study puts the descriptive analysis into practice and, although generalizations are not recommended based upon one case study, the incident can lead to further study involving similar situations.

#### Organization of Remainder of Study

The thesis is organized in four chapters. In Chapter 1, a brief introduction to the study will be reviewed, the need for the study will be presented and the problem will be stated. Also in Chapter 1, the scope and limitations of the thesis will be discussed, the terms will be defined and the methodology of the study will be explained. A review of the literature will be presented in Chapter 2. The literature review will consist of presenting background and historical material, a review of general works in the field of terrorism, and an in-depth review of the two competing conspiracy theories. In Chapter 3, information relating to how the conspiracy theory is perceived in practice and how the political decision-making process is effected by the conspiracy theory of explaining terrorism will be examined. A discussion of terrorism as power politics and a case study of the April 1986 Libyan retaliatory raids by the United States for Libya's alleged involvement with terrorism will also be covered in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, a summarizing

description of the conspiracy theory of terrorism and how political decisions are impacted by the competing theories will be presented. Conclusions and recommendations of this study also will be examined in Chapter 4.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Executive Committee on Terrorism, The United States Government Antiterrorism Program (Washington, D.C.: n.p., June 1979), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Bonnie Cordes et al, Trends in International Terrorism, 1982 and 1983 (Santa Monica, Ca.: The Rand Corporation, 1984), p. v.

<sup>3</sup> Cecil L. Willis, "Criminal Justice Theory: A Case of Trained Incapacity?" Journal of Criminal Justice, 11 (1983), 447.

<sup>4</sup> Alex P. Schmid, Political Terrorism: A Research Guide to Concepts, Theories, Data Bases and Literature (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company, 1983), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Frank P. Williams III, "The Demise of the Criminological Imagination: A Critique of Recent Criminology," Justice Quarterly, 1 (March 1984), 97.

<sup>6</sup> Schmid, p. 210.

<sup>7</sup> Marvin E. Wolfgang, ed., The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 463 (September 1982), 9.

<sup>8</sup> Grant Wardlaw, Political Terrorism: Theory, Tactics, and Counter-Measures (1982; rpt. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Philip P. Weiner, Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas, Vol. II (New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1974), p. 558.

<sup>10</sup> Schmid, p. 111.

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review

YET THE MOST TERRIBLE  
OF TERRORS IS MAN IN  
HIS DELUSIONS.  
(Schiller)

#### Introduction

"Terrorism has become a frequent if not accepted, form of political behavior at the national and international levels in the past decade."<sup>1</sup> Even with the importance and emphasis on terrorism, little is actually known about terrorism. In 1974, Dr. David G. Hubbard addressed the Congressional Committee on Internal Security. A noted authority in the area of skyjacking, Dr. Hubbard made the following assessment of his view of the government's knowledge of terrorism:

The Government knows no more now about terrorism-skyjacking, kidnapping, and assassination, et cetera- than it knew 50 years ago. That same statement may still be valid 50 years from now.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Hubbard was referring to the fact the United States government had no systematic approach for collecting and analyzing terrorist information. Since he first expressed his opinion there has been much improvement noted in this area. Alex P. Schmid has indicated that "the literature of terrorism is young, most studies have been written in the past fifteen years."<sup>3</sup> The literature on terrorism is

relatively new, extremely varied, and it comes from several disciplines.

Sociology, psychology, military science, medicine, history, political science, and criminology are examples of the fields currently involved in the deluge of literature on terrorism. It is a simple task to review and cite a variety of works on terrorism, however, when the subject is limited to conspiracy theories, the task is not so easy. There are very few works dealing specifically with conspiracy theory and much of the documentation for the review has to be extracted from the contents from authors who do not directly address conspiracy theory. No author has written, "I believe in the conspiracy theory of terrorism and here are the reasons why."

The literature review is divided into three main sections. The first deals with a few selected works which cover terrorism from a brief historical perspective and provide general works which present information on the various theories attempting to explain terrorism. The second and third sections cover those specific works which form the basis for the two diverging views the conspiracy theory of terrorism..

#### Background and Historical Information

"The word terror comes from the Latin word 'terrere' which simply means 'to frighten'."<sup>4</sup> The terms "terrorism"

and "terrorist" are of relatively recent date; in fact, "the meaning of terrorism was given in the 1798 supplement of the Dictionnaire of the Academie Francaise."<sup>5</sup> Harkabi notes that terrorism is probably "an outgrowth of guerrilla warfare, which is perhaps the oldest form of warfare. Prehistoric man fought in some kind of guerrilla fashion, trying to strike fear and terror in his neighbors."<sup>6</sup> Laqueur states "irregular forces and guerrilla tactics are mentioned, perhaps for the first time in recorded history, in the Anastas Papyrus of the fifteenth century B.C."<sup>7</sup> However, one of the earliest known examples of a terrorist movement is the Sicarii from Palestine.

The Sicarii, "a religious sect active in the Zealot struggle in Palestine (AD 66-73) seem to have undertaken activities which would qualify them as terrorists."<sup>8</sup> Rapoport points out that "the Sicarri realized that a man is potentially most vulnerable when he considers himself entirely secure. They struck in broad daylight when a victim was surrounded by witnesses and supporters and on occasions universally regarded as sacred."<sup>9</sup> Before the Sicarii movement and since their emergence, the numerous terrorist incidents and groups have been an important part of history. The Assassins, an offshoot of the Ismailis, carried out a wave of attacks in the eleventh century. Walter Laqueur notes "their first leader, Hassan Sibai,

seems to have realized early on that a planned, systematic, long-term campaign of terror carried out by a small, disciplined force could be a most effective political weapon." <sup>10</sup> The history of terrorism is indeed a subject in itself. The focus of this thesis is not the history, but the current impact of conspiracy theory of terrorism in the nineteenth century. Sterling believes real systematic terrorism began in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Claire Sterling postulates that the current wave of terrorism, which she asserts is inspired by conspiracy theory, actually began in 1966. In January 1966, a conference was held in Havana, Cuba which symbolized the beginning of "a global revolutionary strategy to counter the global strategy of American imperialism." <sup>11</sup> The conference became known as the "Tricontinental Conference."

#### The Tricontinental Conference

"It was in 1966 that the Tricontinental Conference in Havana launched its global assault on Western imperialism and, with Soviet Blessings, opened an era of international guerrilla warfare." <sup>12</sup> The conference was attended by Communist leaders and delegates from 83 countries, mostly from Third World developing nations and Communist bloc countries. Many of these countries are actively involved with terrorism. A list of countries which attended the

conference includes:

(t)he former Belgian Congo, the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, Ethiopia, Rhodesia, South Africa, South-West Africa, North and South Yemen, the Palestinians, Laos, Cambodia, South Korea, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Guatemala, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Cyprus, Panama, and the Indonesian province of Northern Kalimantan.<sup>13</sup>

The Soviet Union was well represented, as was Libya, East Germany, Syria, and other Communist surrogates. The conference was headed by Cuba's Fidel Castro, however, Sterling believes "the Tricontinental was Russia's proposition, not his."<sup>14</sup> The purpose of the conference was to provide a strong support foundation between Socialist countries and national liberation movements. Many Western diplomats said "it was...the beginning of a massive thrust against Western capitalism generally and the United States in particular, through the formation of a Guerrilla International."<sup>15</sup> The conference concluded with an "African, Asian, and Latin American Solidarity Organization. Its permanent secretariat was based in Havana. Its secretary-general...was a long-standing Moscow hard-liner on the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party."<sup>16</sup> The events of the Tricontinental Conference may have directly led to an escalation in terrorism in the next few years.

Sterling believes "1968 was clearly the year when a generation born after the last world war declared its own war on society."<sup>17</sup> She cites a variety of events leading up



to the new wave of terrorism. Included are the assassinations of several key political leaders, increased student demonstrations, Vietnam's Tet offensive, and the emergence of a new breed of revolutionary leaders, such as George Habash, Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, and Carlos Marighella.<sup>18</sup> Sterling points out that in 1968, the Soviet Union effectively took control of Cuba and "there is strong evidence of a significant change in the Russian unofficial foreign policy after 1968."<sup>19</sup>

These events in history have set the stage for a review of the literature of the conspiracy theory of terrorism. There are numerous general works relating to terrorism which are important to understanding the various theories which attempt to explain terrorism. These general works provide a framework from which conspiracy theory is better understood.

#### General Works

There are many theories which seek to explain terrorism and many of these competing theories are relatively new. "Theories of terrorism are, with few exceptions, the result of work done in the past fifteen years."<sup>20</sup> However, these theories of terrorism have not all been of recent heritage. In the 1890's, "all kinds of strange theories were bandied about: cranial measures of captured terrorists were taken, and a connection between terrorism and lunar phases was detected."<sup>21</sup> One of the leading criminologists during his

time, Cesare Lombroso conducted research which led to a medical and climatological explanation for terrorism.

Lombroso's research indicated:

Terrorism, like pellagra and some other diseases, was caused by certain vitamin deficiencies, hence its prevalence among the maize-eating people of southern Europe. He also found that the further north one went the less terrorism there was.<sup>22</sup>

His hypothesis was not widely accepted, however, the vitamin deficiency theory has recently been intensively researched for possible links to aggressive behavior.

In his book, Political Terrorism: A Research Guide to Concepts, Theories, Data Bases and Literature, Alex Schmid provides a complete chapter describing most of the current theories and interpretations of terrorism. Schmid has written one of the most comprehensive works on terrorism to be published. His work is well documented and it provides excellent reference material in the area of terrorism. He concentrates on definitions and theory development. His work is cited by numerous authors.

Another book which is popular in the study of terrorism and violence is Ted Gurr's Why Men Rebel. Gurr is a psychologist and his model is based upon Freudian psychoanalysis. Gurr presented the theory of "Relative Deprivation" as a theory of terrorism. His thesis is:

"Relative Deprivation" (RD) is the term used... to denote the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the "ought" and the "is" of

collective value satisfaction, that disposes men to violence.<sup>23</sup>

Paul Wilkinson is one of the leading authors and experts in the field of terrorism. Wilkinson notes in his book, Terrorism and the Liberal State, that such "general theories of violence are remarkably unhelpful for the study of terrorism."<sup>24</sup>

Referring to relative deprivation models such as Ted Gurr's, Wilkinson says "the theory cannot explain why, in similar socio-economic and political conditions, some groups resort to terrorism while others manifest other forms of violence or aggressive behaviour."<sup>25</sup> There are many theories of terrorism and for each theory, there appears to be a counter-theory.

The most referenced author on the field of terrorism is probably Walter Laqueur. Laqueur is a popular historian specializing in revolutionary movements in Europe, Russia, and the Middle East. He is a Professor of History at Tel Aviv University, has taught at Harvard, and is the Chairman of the International Research Council of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. This center is a private and government sponsored research organization and it is one of premier agencies devoted to a variety of social and political problems. One of its major areas of research is terrorism. Many of the nation's experts in the field of terrorism and violence are associated with

the center. Laqueur has written and edited several books, including Guerrilla, Terrorism, The Guerrilla Reader, The Terrorism Reader, and Fascism: A Reader's Guide. Walter Laqueur is generally recognized as one of the leading experts in the field of terrorism.

Brian Jenkins works for the Rand Corporation of Santa Monica, California. He has written numerous articles and chronologies based upon data interpretations of terrorism. Jenkins is a highly referenced writer, however, he is known more for his statistical analyses and in-depth interpretations than for his theories or concepts. In a November 1985 report prepared for the United States Air Force entitled International Terrorism: The Other World War,<sup>26</sup> Jenkins provides a clear and concise policy for using the military in combatting terrorism. What is interesting is that his report mirrors the Reagan Administration's methods in the April 1986 strikes against Libya. He is currently one of the most popular writers and lecturers on terrorism.

There are thousands of books and articles written on terrorism. Many of them have been translated and have become popular in foreign countries. In 1969 an article was written in which has become the most widely read treatise on terrorism ever composed. It is the Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla by Carlos Marighella. Marighella was a Brazilian terrorist who authored the Minimanual as a guide to further

the revolutionary cause in both theory and practice. His manual has become the bible of a majority of terrorist and revolutionary movements throughout the world. He emphasized that "today to be an assailant or a terrorist is a quality that ennobles any honorable man because it is an act worthy of a revolutionary engaged in armed struggle against the shameful military dictatorship and its monstrosities."<sup>27</sup> Although Marighella was killed shortly after writing the Minimanual, it has become the most popular and widely read works on terrorism.

There are many excellent works on terrorism, including those by Yonah Alexander, Claire Sterling, Robert Kupperman, Robert Moss and others. Their work will be cited in the review of the specific area relating to the conspiracy theory of terrorism.

### Conspiracy Theory

Schmid declares "terrorism, characterized often by dramatic actions staged by clandestine groups aiming at prominent targets whose connections to the professed conflict remains obscure to many, seems to lend itself particularly well to conspiracy theories."<sup>28</sup> This theory postulates there exists measurable evidence of the involvement of specific entities in the promulgation of terrorism. Without this involvement, terrorism would certainly decrease. Benjamin Netanyahu is the founder of the Jonathan

Institute, a private foundation which concentrates on terrorism research. He relates that terrorism is not a "sporadic phenomenon born of social misery and frustration. It is rooted in the political ambitions and designs of expansionist states and the groups that serve them."<sup>29</sup> In the political world, it is viewed as a conflict between the communists and the democracies. The managers are the super-powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and the players are those countries which make up their sphere of influence.

The literature dealing specifically with conspiracy theory is limited. The works selected for review are divided into two areas. The first relates to those works which expouse the involvement of the United States, the Central Intelligence Agency, and business interests. The second viewpoint alleges the involvement of the Soviet Union, the KGB, and Communist surrogates. Although the classic terms of "the left" and "the right" may appear to be appropriate, the viewpoints should be reviewed in terms of content and not be confused with traditional political labelling. Thus, viewpoint "A" refers to the alleged United States involvement and viewpoint "B" refers to the alleged Soviet involvement.

### Viewpoint "A" - The Washington Connection

Viewpoint "A" of the conspiracy theory of terrorism refers to the involvement of the United States, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the multi-national corporations as the primary instigators of terrorism in the world. The proponents of this viewpoint state that "U.S.-controlled aid has been positively related to investment climate and inversely related to the maintenance of a democratic order and human rights."<sup>30</sup> This viewpoint is well documented in several works.

The most influential book in this area is currently The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism, by Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman. The basic premise of this book is that the United States produces a climate of terror through its foreign and economic policies. Chomsky and Herman state:

The basic fact is that the United States has organized under its sponsorship and protection a neo-colonial system of client states ruled mainly by terror and serving the interests of a small local and foreign business and military elite.<sup>31</sup>

These interests have, according to the authors, led to the U.S. participation in 18 military coups in Latin America since 1960. This "domino effect"<sup>32</sup> has resulted from U.S. influence "in some cases by means of deliberate subversion or even aggression, but invariably important given the

substantial economic and military penetration and presence of the superpower."<sup>33</sup> Terrorism and violence may be increased with colonial movements. One author relates:

Terrorist violence is inherent in colonialism, for its authority, whether for its imposition or for its substinence, rests on brutal force and has neither customary, traditional, religious or kinship sanction behind it.<sup>34</sup>

The greatest area of influence has been in the underdeveloped countries. The targets for the United States extension of power is the smaller newly emerging countries throughout the world. These countries become the surrogates and bear the scars of terrorism. The authors believe the United States "since World War II, with the great extension of U.S. power...has borne a heavy responsibility for the spread of a plague of neofascism, state terrorism, torture and repression throughout large parts of the underdeveloped world."<sup>35</sup> This view believes terror is used to further economic goals and the "balance of terror appears to have shifted to the West and its clients, with the United States setting the pace as sponsor and supplier."<sup>36</sup>

The notion of direct U.S. involvement in terrorism is not totally unsupported. Dr. Ray S. Cline has worked for the Department of State as a defense and foreign policy advisor to President Reagan and is currently working at the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies. Dr. Cline is also the former Deputy Director of the Central



Intelligence Agency. He discussed the role of the CIA in his book, The CIA Under Reagan, Bush & Casey. His comments support the viewpoint of direct U.S. involvement in act of terrorism. He points out that the "Eisenhower administration in 1960 set up a CIA-run program for training hundreds of highly motivated anti-Castro Cuban refugees in guerrilla warfare."<sup>37</sup> In preparation for the Bay of Pigs invasion, the CIA had developed plans to assassinate Fidel Castro. The training of subversives and assassination attempts are traits commonly referred to terrorist activities. Cline also addresses CIA covert actions in Vietnam, the Middle East, Chile and Italy. Dr. Cline clarifies his personal views in this way:

I believe that small-scale selective covert political action in countries of consequence in support of groups opposing dictatorship and outside domination by the USSR or Communist China is in the national interest of the United States...Almost every nation engages in this kind of secret political activity...secret support of U.S. strategic and foreign policy aims is sensible in the interest of influencing events in the U.S. interest.<sup>38</sup>

Dr. Cline's work is not anti-U.S., nor does it criticize the theory of U.S. covert involvement. Cline is very supportive of U.S. efforts and equally critical of Soviet excursions in the field of subversion and terrorism. He centers on the usefulness of the CIA as an important policy tool which has been subject to many triumphs as well as defeats. His book supports viewpoint "A" only by

providing documentation of U.S. involvement in organizing and supporting incidents commonly referred to as classic "terrorism". Dr. Cline is not the only author to reveal possible links to terrorism by the United States which would support Viewpoint "A" of the conspiracy theory of terrorism.

A former CIA agent, Philip Agee, compiled a diary of his twelve year career with the CIA. His book, Inside the Company: CIA Diary, describes operations which also support viewpoint "A". The clandestine operations "which occurred for the most part in Latin America, were typical of those undertaken in countries of the Far East, Near East and Africa."<sup>39</sup> Referring to CIA operations in Uruguay in 1964, Agee relates:

Other operations were designed to take control of the streets away from communists and other leftists, and our squads, often with the participation of off-duty policemen, would break up their meetings and generally terrorize them. Torture of communists and other extreme leftists was used in interrogations by our liaison agents in the police.<sup>40</sup>

Agee hoped his diary would inspire others who had become disenchanted with the Agency. His hopes became reality when Frank Snepp, a CIA operative for eight years, published a similarly critical work entitled Decent Interval in 1976. In 1978, John Stockwell, a twelve year veteran of the CIA, wrote a book called In Search of Enemies-A CIA Story. Both works continued the central theme of Agee's work. Agee wrote "in the CIA we justified our penetration,

disruption and sabotage of the left in Latin America-around the world for that matter-because we felt morality changed on crossing national frontiers."<sup>41</sup> He fully supports the Chomsky and Herman's assertion by remarking:

American capitalism, based as it is on the exploitation of the poor, with its fundamental motivation in personal greed, simply cannot survive without force-without a secret police force. The argument is with capitalism and it is capitalism that must be opposed, with the CIA, FBI and other security agencies understood as logical, necessary manifestations of a ruling class's determination to retain power and privilege.<sup>42</sup>

In the United States, Philip Agee's work has received criticism from many areas, but his writing is used to validate the American conspiracy theory. Ladislav Bittman is the former Deputy Director of the Czechoslovakian Disinformation Department. He asserts that Agee is not simply a disillusioned CIA agent who wants to make the world better. Bittman says Agee "became a newborn Marxist who wants his readers to adopt his political philosophy."<sup>43</sup> Bittman further relates Agee's "activities in the past ten years brand him the most effective collaborator and anti-American propagandist that ever worked for the Soviet Union disinformation service."<sup>44</sup> Many Americans and NATO allies have branded Agee, Snapp, and Stockwell as traitors. The proponents of Viewpoint "A" refer to them as enlightened compatriots. Thus, even within the limited literature of conspiracy theories, the opinions influence beliefs and

methods of operation.

Chomsky and Herman cite seven methods used by the CIA to support subversive activities and terrorism. They are:

1. Outright murder of political leaders such as Lumumba and General Schneider and the numerous attempts on the life of Castro;
2. The direct conspiracies with terrorists, mercenaries or military factions to disrupt or overthrow a government in disfavor;
3. Political bribery and the funding of foreign politicians;
4. Propaganda, which is invariably undercover and is often carried out by subsidies to researchers, research institutes, publishers, and journalists;
5. Organization and funding of demonstrations;
6. Infiltration of unfavored organizations and political parties; and
7. Data collection used by favored governments against its enemies.<sup>45</sup>

Viewpoint "A" asserts these forms of terrorism are "functionally related to the needs of U.S. (and other) business interests...In an important sense, therefore, the torturers in the client states are functionaries of IBM, Citibank, Allis Chalmers and the U.S. Government, playing their assigned roles in a system that has worked according to choice and plan."<sup>46</sup> In addition, the use of unconventional warfare "offers a range of usable policy options for bringing U.S. power to bear in volatile situations. It provides a selection of possible responses more forceful than normal diplomacy yet less costly and less risky than

conventional military action."<sup>47</sup> Thus, terrorism is viewed as being supported by the United States government and business interests. This support has been most evident in military and secret police operations.

The role of the U.S. military and CIA is discussed by Chomsky and Herman. They view the CIA and the military as the key elements in furthering U.S. involvement in specific acts of terrorism. They state:

Military training and supply, the build-up and cultivation of the military and intelligence establishments, as well as as CIA surveillance and destabilization, have been key elements of the "Washington Connection," employed to protect U.S. interests in its client states in the post-World War II era.<sup>48</sup>

The viewpoint of the conspiracy theory of terrorism which sees terrorism as the function of capitalistic societies is well documented. Although the literature advocating Viewpoint "A" is not as extensive in the United States as the literature of Viewpoint "B", the argument presents strong support. Viewpoint "A" advocates sum up their beliefs in the following way:

The U.S. global effort to maintain and enlarge the the areas with a favorable investment climate has necessitated regular resort to terror, directly (as in the case of Indochina) and more often indirectly through subsidy and support for repressive clients.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, "Washington has become the torture and political murder capital of the world."<sup>50</sup> The conspiracy theory of terrorism also can be viewed in the reverse form with the

Soviet Union, the KGB and the Soviet satellite countries being the force behind terrorism in today's world. This viewpoint is also well documented.

Viewpoint "B" - The Moscow Connection

The Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, Benjamin Netanyahu, wrote:

The Soviet Union, several of its Eastern European satellites, Cuba and North Korea on the one hand, and Middle Eastern states such as Libya, Iran, Syria, Iraq, and South Yemen on the other, have given terrorists weapons, training, and money. They have provided sanctuary, safe passage, and safe houses, often using their embassies and diplomatic pouches for these purposes.<sup>51</sup>

He goes on to state that the "assistance to terrorism is not limited to the operational plane. It is also given on the crucial political level, especially in the campaign to legitimize terrorism and to block international measures against it."<sup>52</sup> The Soviet support of terrorism throughout the world is the focus of Viewpoint "B" of the conspiracy theory of terrorism.

Donald M. Kerr explained in his article, "Coping With Terrorism," the role of the Soviets in terrorism. Kerr stated:

The threat appears to include direct national instruments of Soviet policy operating at one or more removes from the USSR; those indirect instruments of Soviet policy that are influenced rather than controlled, and respond to independent motivations that are only occasionally congruent with those of the USSR but rarely conflict with them.<sup>53</sup>

This is the primary argument of Viewpoint "B". Alex Schmid observed that "the breakthrough of the Soviet Conspiracy theory occurred with the publication of Claire Sterling's book The Terror Network: The Secret War of International Terrorism."54 Claire Sterling has worked as a U.S. foreign correspondent for over thirty years. Her most recent work has been in Italy and she has become one of the most quoted authors in the field of terrorism. Her work documents Soviet involvement in supporting numerous terrorist organizations. In her book, the thesis is summed up with a statement by Dr. Hans Josef Horchem of West Germany's Office for the Defense of the Constitution. In 1979, Dr. Horchem remarked to Claire Sterling, "the KGB is engineering international terrorism. The facts can be proven, documented, and are well known to the international Western intelligence community."55

Sterling believes the value of Soviet ties to terrorism in Italy, France, the Middle East, Europe, Spain, and other areas of the world "lay in their efforts to weaken and demoralize, confuse, humiliate, frighten, paralyze, and if possible dismantle the West's democratic societies."56 According to a noted author, Jean-Francois Revel, international terrorism is designed to destroy democracies. He asserts:

International terrorism, mostly terrorism organized and manipulated by states, is one of the many tools

totalitarianism uses to destroy democracy. It is triggered, masterminded, funded, and armed by the Soviet Union or its proxies.<sup>57</sup>

The viewpoint of the Soviet Conspiracy of Terrorism has become fashionably popular during this governmental administration. There are numerous works relating to support of Claire Sterling's thesis that it is the Soviet Union who is behind the current deluge of terrorism. Her thesis has gathered momentum in the United States.

In Neil Livingstone's book, The War Against Terrorism, he argues:

During the past decade and a half...the USSR, operating in tandem with its Eastern bloc neighbors and various proxy nations, has relentlessly extended its influence over nearly all of the globe's revolutionary terrorist movements by means of cooptation, internal intrigue, offers of arms and assistance, and the training and indoctrination of literally thousands of revolutionaries in a vast network of schools and camps scattered around the world that are operated directly or indirectly by the Soviet State Security Committee (KGB) and allied intelligence services.<sup>58</sup>

Livingstone is the Vice President of a large public relations firm based in Washington, D.C., concentrating on foreign policy and national security matters. He has been the President of the Institute for Subnational Conflict and director for Terrorism and Low-level Warfare at the American Security Council. He sees the Soviet strategy of supporting terrorism as a "low-cost strategy for nibbling away at the peripheries of the Western alliance, for undermining NATO



and its member states, and for scoring major gains in the Third World that could potentially deny the United States and its allies access to critical sea lanes and raw materials."<sup>59</sup>

In Yonah Alexander's article, "Nation-States' Support of Terrorism and Political Violence: Case of the U.S.S.R.", he believes that "terrorism, whether backed directly or indirectly by the Soviet Union or independently initiated, is an indispensable tactical tool in the Communist struggle for power and influence within and among nations."<sup>60</sup> He cites the broad goals which the Soviet Union hopes to achieve from terrorism as including:

1. Influencing developments in neighboring countries;
2. Drawing non-Communist states into the Soviet Alliance system;
3. Helping to create new states in which it will have considerable influence as a result of its support of those countries' claims to self-determination;
4. Weakening the political, economic, and military infrastructure of anti-Soviet alliances such as NATO; and
5. Initiating proxy operations in distant geographic locations where direct conventional military activities requiring long-distance logistics are impractical.<sup>61</sup>

Viewpoint "B" of the conspiracy theory of terrorism sees the various uses of terrorism as effective tools for combatting the forces of capitalism. There are many ways a

government may support terrorist activities. The Soviet influence has been largely in the area of training and weapons. "Virtually every terrorist arsenal in the world contains largely Soviet and Eastern bloc weapons,"<sup>62</sup> asserts Neil Livingstone.

Claire Sterling relates that it was "not the CIA that ran guerrilla training camps for tens of thousands of terrorists in Cuba, Algeria, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, South Yemen, North Korea, East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union."<sup>63</sup> Bittman relates "the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Cuba have provided various kinds of assistance to terrorists, including weapons, ammunition and explosives, military training, financing, and sanctuaries where they could plan their operations undisturbed or communicate safely with other terrorist groups."<sup>64</sup> This support is seen to be instrumental in the terrorist cause. One of the most popular conspiracy theory support tactics is the use of disinformation.

#### Disinformation

Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson wrote a book entitled Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy. They conclude that the Soviet Union leaders "use the term 'active measures' (aktivnyye meropriatia) to describe an array of overt and covert techniques for influencing events and

behavior in, and the actions of, foreign countries."<sup>65</sup>

These instruments were referred to as "dezinformatsia" prior to the 1960's.<sup>66</sup> These active measures vary and they may include the following:

Active measures may entail influencing the policies of another government, undermining confidence in its leaders and institutions, disrupting relations between other nations...Active measures may be conducted overtly through officially-sponsored foreign propaganda channels...Active measures also may involve military maneuvers or paramilitary assistance to insurgent movements and terrorist groups.<sup>67</sup>

The concept of disinformation has been made popular in the United States by the works of Robert Moss and Arnaud de Borchgrave. Moss and de Borchgrave have written two novels relating to the Soviet use of disinformation at work in America. Disinformation is defined by Bittman as "a carefully constructed false message leaked into an opponent's communication system to deceive the decision-making elite or the public."<sup>68</sup> The Spike and Monimbo tell of the the conspiracy to keep the truth from the American public about the real Soviet threat through the use of intricate campaigns of disinformation. Both novels portray incidents that are believable and supportive of conspiracy theory. One particular conversation is indicative of this "reality".

In The Spike, the Vice President of the United States is having a heated conversation with the President of the Soviet Union. The Vice President says, "we've put up with

your sort of liberation movements around the world for quite a few years now, Mr. President...It's about time you learn to put up with pro-Western guerrillas."<sup>69</sup> Although the novel is fictional, it has been widely referred to as providing supporting evidence for the Soviet conspiracy theory of terrorism. The sequel, Monimbo, explores plans for the Soviet leadership and the KGB to destabilize the West through their Cuban proxies using the methods of terrorism, drugs, and racial violence.

The "Monimbo Plan" refers to the strategy for a weak nation to destroy its giant neighbor using subversive tactics. According to a statement attributed to Fidel Castro in Monimbo, Nicaragua, in July, 1980:

We have many weapons...we have agents of absolute confidence all over the United States who are ready to undertake whatever actions are necessary at the time of our choosing. The yanquis cannot even begin to imagine the capabilities that we have in their country. You all read about the riots in Miami this spring. We can accomplish things that would make the riots in Florida look like a sun-shower.<sup>70</sup>

What these two novels have done has been to lend credibility to the Soviet Conspiracy Theory of terrorism. Moss has recently published another novel, Russia Rules, expounding this same type of thinking. Both Robert Moss and Arnaud de Borchgrave have outstanding credentials and to many readers, the stories are truly believable and serve to perpetuate the Cold War mentality. The former U.S.

Ambassador to the United Nations, Jeanne Kirkpatrick edited a book entitled, The Strategy of Deception: A Study in World-Wide Communist Tactics. Although it was written in 1963, it is supported by the recent work of Communist defector, Ladislav Bittman. Bittman wrote a book entitled, The KGB and Soviet Disinformation: An Insider's View, in which he describes the Soviet efforts to deceive the American public and their willingness to use terrorism to further their cause. Bittman, Moss, de Borchgrave, Sterling, and others have published articles relating to the Soviet involvement in extensive disinformation campaigns. They focus upon projects of disinformation conducted by the Soviets and resulting tacit support for any terrorist organization seeking to further the goals of the Soviet Union to undermine the West.

#### The Soviet Network

Arnaud de Borchgrave is the editor in chief of the Washington Times and a former correspondent for Newsweek. He believes that "terrorism, not nuclear war, is the immediate threat."<sup>71</sup> He relates that:

Few people in the media or in academia understand the indirect war now waged by the Soviet Union and its allies. The Soviets have been exceedingly skillful in pursuing, by all means short of outright war, objectives traditionally pursued on the battlefield. Terrorism, along with subversion and disinformation, is a principal weapon directed at societies which the Soviets

wish to undermine, chief among which, as KGB documents emphasize, remains the United States.<sup>72</sup>

Robert Kupperman is a Senior Associate for the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies. Although he does not accuse the Soviets of causing every terrorist incident, he remarked:

They have been involved in training; in providing logistics and weaponry; in operating schools (including graduate-level education at Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow); in what to do to disrupt nations; in penetrating satellite countries, where in one case they apparently engineered the near assassination of the Pope.<sup>73</sup>

Kupperman was referring to the alleged Bulgarian and Soviet connection to the attempt on the Pope's life. In John L. Scherer's book, The Plot to Kill the Pope, Scherer argues that "the plot to kill Pope John Paul II on May 13, 1981, provides a unique opportunity to examine how East Europeans carry out a conspiracy."<sup>74</sup> The conspiracy theory holds that the Bulgarians do not act without the approval of the Soviets. In a study conducted by Roberta Goren and summarized in her book, The Soviet Union and Terrorism, she indicates that her research "establishes that the active support of international terrorism in countries outside the Soviet bloc has been part of Soviet government policy since 1917 and is consistent with Soviet ideology."<sup>75</sup> She maintained that "the Soviet Union has always has one supreme aim: to establish Communism everywhere on earth...One method it has always used, with varying degrees of

intensity, is terrorism."<sup>76</sup> Her statement has been the subject of intense debate between the two sides.

It is clear that there exists two opposing views of the conspiracy theory of terrorism. One view seeks to examine the alleged U.S. and business involvement as being the primary forces behind terrorism and the other view postulates the purported Soviet influence in fostering a world of terrorism. What is unclear is the supposition that whenever there are two diametrically opposing views, there should also be a neutral or centralist view.

The research does not indicate substantial support for a neutral view on the conspiracy theory of terrorism. Robert Kupperman relates that "although it might be overstating matters to posit central control (that is, the KGB), it is obvious that the Soviets have contributed substantially to their support."<sup>77</sup> Grant Wardlaw believes that:

Nobody has yet provided unequivocal evidence that supports a simple-minded Soviet-culprit theory of terrorist control and neither are there any serious analyses of Soviet strategic objectives and the manner in which these would be served by support for terrorism. The evidence of Soviet support for destabilising influences in the Western-aligned world is overwhelming but it indicates a capacity of opportunistic exploitation of situations rather than their specific creation and direction.<sup>78</sup>

Paul Wilkinson warns "against any premature general theory or model of the causes, inception and development of terrorism."<sup>79</sup> In his works, Wilkinson cites examples of

both U.S. and Soviet involvement in acts commonly referred to as terrorism, but he is not seeking to "present any general conspiracy theory or cold war grand simplification to explain contemporary terrorist phenomena."<sup>80</sup>

Most writers do not express an opinion when referring to those situations relating to conspiracy theory of terrorism. In most cases it appears to be safer to not address the issue. It is currently very popular to expouse the Soviet Conspiracy Theory and very un-American to discuss the American Conspiracy Theory. It is important to remember the conspiracy theory of terrorism is only one of many theories which seek to explain terrorism.

The intent of this literature review is not to emphasize a particular philosophy on the causes of terrorism. The purpose is merely to review the issues presented by the two opposing views of the conspiracy theory of terrorism to attempt to gain a better understanding of those issues. The conspiracy theory may or may not be valid, but it certainly is contributing to much of the current rhetoric in the field today. The conspiracy theory of terrorism can also be examined and explained through practical application.



## Notes

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## CHAPTER 3

### Applied Conspiracy Theory

I will send my terror  
ahead of you and throw  
into confusion every  
nation - Exodus 23:27

The conspiracy theory of terrorism is not a difficult concept to understand. Conspiracy theories are enhanced by a body of terminology from the past which includes terms such as propaganda, psychological warfare, counterintelligence, disinformation, espionage and subversion. These concepts have given conspiracy theory a unique power in today's world. Conspiracy theories appear to be the guideline for government policy making in many countries, including both the United States and the Soviet Union. The primary importance of the conspiracy theory of terrorism is that the current literature perpetuates its utility and serves to further the Cold War mentality of the two most powerful nations on earth.

In this chapter, the impact of the conspiracy theory of terrorism upon politics will be examined. Harold G. Lasswell wrote a book entitled, Politics: Who Gets What, When and How, in which he defines politics as a conflict resolution process that determines "who gets what, when and how."<sup>1</sup> Satisfactory achievement in this conflict resolution

process depends upon the skilful use of a number of power resources. These "potential power resources - wealth, status, position, leadership skills, information, legitimacy, authority - can affect policy outcomes."<sup>2</sup> The conspiracy theory of terrorism elevates terrorism to the position of a potential power source in the political arena. Brian Crozier relates that "political terrorism has become an essential component in a relatively new and sometimes highly successful technique of power."<sup>3</sup>

The impact of the conspiracy theory of terrorism upon the decision-making process is the focus of this chapter. This analysis will clarify the role of theory as it relates to practical application. The theory versus practice dilemma will be reviewed through a brief review of the April 1986 bombing strike by the United States against Libya. The Libyan incident and Libya's involvement in terrorism will provide support for understanding how theory effects practice from both the United States and Soviet perspective. Finally, the consequences of ideology as it relates to conspiracy theory will be presented. The role of the conspiracy theory of terrorism in the political power process is an important aspect in today's world.

#### Terrorism is Power

The conspiracy theory of terrorism necessitates the belief that the use of terrorism is a politically

advantageous tool to the sponsor of the terrorist act.

"International terrorism is power from the point of view of the sponsor state,"<sup>4</sup> argues Roberta Goren in her book The Soviet Union and Terrorism. She continues her argument by stating:

In the context of global power politics with the existing potential for nuclear devastation, international terrorism can be a greater source of power than previously suspected. The sponsor state runs little risk of confrontation with the adversary and...(t)he use of terrorism therefore becomes a tactic in a larger objective.<sup>5</sup>

This power is often manifested in the "harnessing of concentrated publicity through the media exposure which a terrorist act inevitably receives; that attention...has proved to be the greatest expression of the power of the terrorist group."<sup>6</sup> Brian M. Jenkins says "terrorist violence puts pressure on a government both directly through overt threats and actions, and indirectly through instilling fear in the population."<sup>7</sup> The Report of the Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism observed the impact of power on terrorism. The 1977 report noted:

Currently, much of the world's terrorism, and, in particular, political terrorism, stems from changes in the balance of power since 1945 and from certain easily identifiable struggles for self-determination and the responses to them.<sup>8</sup>

This pressure is power in the political arena.

Sponsors of terrorism use terrorism as a form of conflict.

They seldom consider their actions as criminal or



terroristic. The sponsors have a vested interest in refuting allegations of involvement in terrorism.

Proponents of both sides of the conspiracy theory of terrorism denounce terrorism. Neil Livingstone notes "predictably, in world forums and policy statements, the USSR opposes terrorism and maintains that states have the right of self-defense when confronted with subversive or terroristic activities by other states."<sup>9</sup> The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, William Casey, states that "publicly the Soviets posture is that they 'disapprove' of terrorism and that they consider terrorism to be 'leftist adventurism' and simplistic ideology."<sup>10</sup> It is clear that the Soviets do not support "terrorism" as they define terrorism. Neil Livingstone clarified this position:

Moscow nevertheless has qualified its opposition to terrorism by affirming that wars of national liberation cannot be considered terrorism so long as the conflict is confined to the actual country in question.<sup>11</sup>

This view gains additional support from Roberta Goren's work. She claimed the Soviet Union believes "aggression can only exist when an action is taken by a non-revolutionary Western state. It therefore never finds aggression committed by itself or any Socialist bloc state...In the Soviet perception, 'terrorism' is only possible in capitalist societies."<sup>12</sup> Goren indicated that the "Soviet legal doctrine has "at no time rejected or condemned terrorist

activities as a tactic...as long as that conflict could be regarded by the Kremlin as 'revolutionary' and therefore perpetrated by 'freedom fighters' or 'workers' against the 'exploiters'."13 Those who would accuse the Soviets of sponsoring terrorism would point out that, in spite of a difference in terminology, the acts sponsored are tantamount to terrorism. Those who profess the United States involvement in terrorism have similar arguments.

The United States has also publicly denounced the use of terrorism, most recently in an interview with the Secretary of Defense following the bombing of Libya. According to the Sacramento Bee:

Weinberger said the air strikes will send an "unmistakable signal" that the United States will not stand still in the face of terrorism and will "go very far" in deterring future acts of terrorism.14

This echoed the 1983 Long Commission Report findings. Following the October 23, 1983 terrorist attack on the Marine barracks at the Beirut International Airport, the Secretary of Defense convened a commission to conduct an independent inquiry into the event. In this incident, 241 United States military personnel were killed when a terrorist drove a truck loaded with explosives into their barracks while the servicemen were sleeping. The Commission concluded:

That state sponsored terrorism is an important part of the spectrum of warfare and that adequate response

to this increasing threat requires an active national policy which seeks to deter attack or reduce its effectiveness. The Commission further concludes that this policy needs to be supported by political and diplomatic actions and by a wide range of timely military response capabilities.<sup>15</sup>

On October 19, 1984, President Reagan signed into law H.R. 6311. This law is known as the 1984 Act to Combat International Terrorism. According to President Reagan, "this act will provide resources and authorities essential in countering the insidious threat terrorism imposes...This nation bears global responsibilities that demand that we maintain a worldwide presence and not succumb in these cowardly attempts at intimidation."<sup>16</sup> According to United States policy, terrorism is cowardly and the United States will fight terrorism.

Viewpoint "A" proponents argue the United States actively supports terrorism. They document support for "freedom fighters" in Nicaragua, anti-Castro rebels, and other "pro-Western militants". Viewpoint "B" advocates would document Soviet training, financial, and political support of a number of active terrorist groups, Soviet atrocities in Afghanistan, and tacit approval of most "revolutionaries". The conspiracy theory of terrorism finds support and power in both views.

The notion that terrorism is power can be supported by advocates of the conspiracy theory. Brian Crozier defines power as "what individuals and governments can get away

with."<sup>17</sup> This certainly places terrorism into the political power process. This process can be clarified through a brief case study of the alleged Libyan and Soviet Union connections in terrorism and the resulting United States response. A case study will best illustrate the role of conspiracy theory of terrorism in the decision-making process.

#### Case Study

Libya received its independence in 1951 and at that time it was described in United Nations documents as "the poorest nation in the world."<sup>18</sup> In 1969, seventy young military officers seized power and within a week Muammar Qaddafi (also spelled Khadafy) emerged as the government leader. Libya has since increased in wealth and stature, however, according to historian Ellen Laipson:

Libya is simultaneously an extremely wealthy and a very underdeveloped nation. Its wealth affords it greater flexibility than more dependent states...but at the same time, its internal weaknesses makes it dependent on outside help, and for security and practical reasons, this often comes from Soviet or Eastern bloc states.<sup>19</sup>

Neil Livingstone relates that "shortly after Muammar Qaddafi seized power...he began lavishing his country's wealth on an assortment of terrorist groups."<sup>20</sup> Although Qaddafi initially denounced both communism and capitalism as being inappropriate for the development of his country, the increasing isolation of Libya has led to increased Soviet

involvement in Libyan affairs. The Soviet Union has found several advantageous reasons to support Libya.

In her article, "Libya and the Soviet Union: Alliance at Arm's Length," Ellen Laipson presents three reasons for the Soviet interest in Libya. As outlined in a book edited by Walter Laqueur, The Pattern of Soviet Conduct in the Third World, she suggests:

1. The Soviet political objectives in Libya are based on Libya anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist, and anti-capitalist rhetoric by Colonel Qaddafi;

2. The Soviet strategic objectives center upon Libya's location on the southern shore of the Mediterranean and the Soviets continue to seek naval and air base rights in Libya;

3. The Soviets have found Libya to be a valuable trading partner. Libya has provided cash to the Soviets for military hardware and this has helped offset the Soviet balance of payment difficulties.<sup>21</sup>

The Soviet objectives in Libya are dependent upon continued Soviet support for Qaddafi's regime and Libya has actively sought the support of the Soviets. This support has been instrumental in furthering the Soviet conspiracy theory of terrorism. "The Libyan involvement in international terrorism, through financial support and through training provided in Libya to a broad spectrum of terrorist groups, is another activity of special interest to the

Soviet Union,"<sup>22</sup> according to Laipson. She believes that "Qaddafi's reputedly unmatched activity in this field is, at a minimum, an unspoken dimension of the Soviet interest in Libya."<sup>23</sup>

#### Libyan Terror Network

It is generally considered by most experts that Libya is actively involved in terrorism. Moshe Arens is the former Israeli Minister of Defense and former Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations. He wrote an article for the Jonathan Institute entitled "Terrorist States" and it was published in Benjamin Netanyahu's book Terrorism: How The West Can Win. Arens declares that Libya, under Qaddafi:

has broken all records in the methodical use of terror and subversion...Libya has supported most of the terrorist groups throughout the world. It has served as a haven for many international terrorists. Murderers and hijackers of airplanes have been received in Libya as heroes. There are more than twenty Libyan training camps for terrorists of various nationalities.<sup>24</sup>

Claire Sterling cites a few of the groups supported by Qaddafi. "The list ran from Nicaragua's Sandinistas, Argentina's Montoneros, and Uruguay's Tupamaro's to the IRA Provisionals, Spanish Basques, French Bretons and Corsicans, Sardinian And Sicilian separatists, Turks, Iranians, Japanese, and Moslem insurgents in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, to name just some."<sup>25</sup> In addition to allegedly supporting specific groups, Qaddafi is

also reported to have been involved in sending his own terrorist squads out and financing other hit squads.

The Terrorism, Violence, Insurgency Journal reported that Qaddafi had personally ordered the murders of some of his opponents. In its summer 1985 "TVI Update," it reported:

Colonel Moammar Quaddafi of Libya continued his campaign to eliminate all opponents of his regime wherever they may be, with the April assassination of a Libyan exile in Bonn...Since 1980, Libyan hit squads have killed at least 15 anti-Quaddafi exiles in Rome, Athens, and London.<sup>26</sup>

Qaddafi has used his money and power to foster a wide variety of terrorism throughout the world. He "extended his power all the way to London when he had several leading dissident civilians assassinated there."<sup>27</sup> Libyan diplomats who fired upon a crowd of anti-Qaddafi demonstrators and subsequently killed a British policewoman were granted political immunity upon Qaddafi's request and deported by the British government. Arthur J. Goldberg reports that "after the expulsion of the Libyan terrorists from Britain, he (Qaddafi) declared that he was dispatching more hit squads abroad and, on television, gave the killers of Constable Fletcher a hero's welcome."<sup>28</sup> This type of public action has led experts to critique the motives and rationality of the Libyan leader. However, the Soviets will continue to support Libya as long as Soviet objectives in the area are being met. Libya has maintained its close ties

with the Soviet Union primarily through the purchasing of Soviet built weaponry.

Livingstone pointed out the extent of Soviet involvement in Libyan military affairs. He related Libya has:

Purchased billions of dollars worth of Soviet weaponry. Soviet and Warsaw Pact military advisors stationed permanently in Libya train Libyans in the use of their newly acquired weapons and provide necessary maintenance for the more sophisticated hardware. Soviet and North Korean pilots fly Soviet-made Libyan jets and operate surface-to-air-missile batteries. Qaddafi has transferred millions of dollars worth of weapons to more than forty terrorists groups around the world.<sup>29</sup>

These weapons are often transferred directly from the Soviets or indirectly through other Warsaw Pact countries to Libya and on to terrorist groups without restrictions placed on Libya by the Soviets. The conspiracy theory of terrorism would point out that the Soviets are supporting terrorism through surrogates such as Libya. Many experts believe this use of proxies is showing a change in Soviet policy. Livingstone asserts "the USSR...is increasingly shifting away from direct ties with terrorist movements, especially those in Europe, in favor of operating through surrogates."<sup>30</sup> The struggle for power continues between the superpowers through the use of surrogates.

#### Conspiracy Theory and Surrogate Warfare

Daniel Greene, a Times staff writer, observed that "Ronald Reagan and Moammar Khadafy have been denouncing each other ever since Reagan became President."<sup>31</sup> Greene observed



that Colonel Khadafy's reputation for "blatantly supporting international terrorism and defying the United States to do anything about it has finally goaded Ronald Reagan to retaliate against his Libyan nemesis with military force."<sup>32</sup> The groundwork for United States action against Libya had been carefully planned.

Following the December 1985 terrorist attacks at the Rome and Vienna airports in which the Palestinian terrorist groups threw grenades and fired automatic weapons in an indiscriminate manner, the United States found evidence that linked Colonel Moammar Khadafy to the incidents. The groups were reportedly led by famed terrorist Abu Nidal and supported by Libyan training, money and planning. According to Barbara Rehm of the New York Daily News Service:

Warning that 'terrorism cannot go unanswered,' the United States on Monday accused Libyan strongman Col. Moammar Khadafy of supporting the terrorists who attacked the international airports at Rome and Vienna, Austria, last week and signaled possible U.S. retaliation.<sup>33</sup>

The media throughout the world began printing articles referring to the United States increasing willingness to use military power against the Libyan regime. Then Khadafy drew an imaginary line across the entire Gulf of Sidra and vowed to fight anybody who crossed it. The Gulf of Sidra was claimed by Khadafy to be territorial waters, however, much of the water is clearly within international water boundaries.

In March 1986, President Reagan responded by sending the U.S. Navy's Sixth Fleet to the area to conduct "naval exercises" in the Mediterranean and Black Sea near the imaginary line drawn by Khadafy. The United States called Khadafy's bluff and, upon being provoked by ineffective Soviet-made weaponry, the U.S. fired upon Libya resulting in U.S. naval strikes against missile sites, the sinking of at least two Libyan gunboats, and the alleged loss of 56 Libyan lives. The President received overwhelming support from the American public and subsequently increased his pressure on the Libyan government to stop supporting terrorism. It did not work.

On April 2, 1986, a bomb exploded on a TWA jetliner as it was preparing to land in Athens and four Americans were killed. Just three days later in West Berlin, a bomb exploded in a discotheque frequented by American servicemen and their families. An Army sergeant and a Turkish woman were killed instantly (a second military member died in June, 1986 from injuries received during the blast); 204 people were injured, among them 79 Americans.<sup>34</sup> President Reagan attested to the Libyan involvement in the Berlin bombing. He disclosed:

The evidence is now conclusive that the terrorist bombing of La Belle discotheque was planned and executed under the direct orders of the Libyan regime...Our evidence is direct, it is precise, it is irrefutable. We have solid evidence about

other attacks Khadafy has planned against United States installations and diplomats and even American tourists.<sup>35</sup>

These statements came during the Presidential statement in which he described the U.S. retaliatory attack against Libya. On April 14, 1986, the President of the United States ordered the military to engaged specific targets in Libya which were reportedly critical to the terrorist movement. The United States had tried economic sanctions and political sanctions. The terrorism continued and Khadafy openly supported terrorists. The decision to use military force did not come quickly. After all, according to Claire Sterling, "the Soviet Union had simply laid a loaded gun on the table, leaving others to get on with it."<sup>36</sup> This is the conspiracy theory of terrorism in action. Paul Wilkinson describes this as "proxy war."<sup>37</sup> The only real decisions to make were what types of response were appropriate and how could the government keep from involving the Soviets in a direct superpower conflict?

#### Conspiracy Theory and Decision-Making

The United States had previously researched the impact of military intervention in terrorism. Brian M. Jenkins highlighted the rising popular opinion in a research effort conducted by the Rand Corporation for the United States Air Force. Jenkins explained:

State sponsorship of terrorism adds a new dimension to the terrorist threat. It represents escalation, in that state-supported terrorists have greater resources of every kind-weapons, connections, mobility, information, recruits-yet states using terrorist assaults on U.S. assets also run a greater risk, as they can be more easily identified than small groups operating independently.<sup>38</sup>

Jenkins provides suggested guidelines for using the military as a response to terrorism. The United States response to Libya sponsored terrorism appears to be written from the Rand Corporation report:

1. Military operations might be considered in cases where the United States has incontrovertible evidence that agents in the employ of a foreign government have carried out a terrorist attack, that a government has instigated a terrorist attack...or that a government is able to bring the perpetrators to justice but refuses;

2. Military operations could be aimed at limiting a terrorist group's ability to operate, persuading governments sponsoring terrorism to desist, demonstrating to other governments that the United States is not impotent, and that sponsoring terrorism does have costs;

3. A retaliatory mission may entail either special or conventional operations but with some politically important operational requirements...The emphasis would be on a single, successful mission rather than sustained combat operations... crucial requirement to minimize casualties... presence of an immediate rescue capability...and psychological operations.<sup>39</sup>

Undoubtedly other plans and reports were considered prior to the United States decision to bomb Libya, however, this particular government-sponsored document dated November 1985 has summarized the key issues involved. The Soviet conspiracy theory of terrorism considers that although the Soviets and its' surrogates support terrorism, it is a

political disaster in today's world to publicly admit such support. This may be one reason the Soviets prefer to deal indirectly with terrorism through other countries. The United States realistically did not have to worry about the Soviets becoming involved with the Libyan affair because "Russia's rulers, like almost everyone else, regard the colonel (Khadafy) as unpredictable and unreliable."<sup>40</sup>

The Soviets are continuing to use disinformation to further their cause. In an article written by Celestine Bohlen entitled "Soviets Pledge Aid But Warn Libya," she asserts the Soviet Union has "pledged unchanging support for Libya but issued a veiled warning against terrorist attacks that could serve as 'pretexts' for 'imperialist attacks'."<sup>41</sup> Bohlen reports that the Soviet Union has strongly criticized the U.S. bombing attack and cited it as an example of "state terrorism."<sup>42</sup> Rhetoric and accusations are common within politics and serve to support the conspiracy theory of terrorism.

There is much more that goes into a decision similar to the one made to use force against the government of Libya for its alleged participation in terrorism than conspiracy theory. It would be naive and irresponsible to claim otherwise. However, the decision was affected by the Reagan Administration's belief that Libya, Khadafy in particular, was part of a grand scheme to use terrorism as a form of

warfare against the United States. This scheme was referred to in the media, in the writings of novelists, in official reports, and in the policies of both the Libyan and U.S. administration. According to the Cold War attitudes, Libya is only a small, but violent, part in the overall attempt to undermine the democratic way of life. The recent Libyan excursion is a classic case history for attempting to justify the conspiracy theory of terrorism. This particular ideology has some specific expected results.

#### Consequences of the Conspiracy Theory

The proponents of the conspiracy theory of terrorism can be expected to behave in certain ways. In 1973, Walter B. Miller wrote an article for the Journal of Criminal Justice and Criminology in which he discussed the role of ideology in relation to criminal justice policy making. His concepts can be applied to the anticipated beliefs and behaviors of those who may intensely profess the conspiratorial theories. Seven consequences were reviewed.

Miller cited polarization as the first major consequence of a belief. According to Miller, "the more heavily a belief takes on the character of sacred dogma, the more necessary it becomes to view the proponents of opposing positions as devils and scoundrels."<sup>43</sup> Thus, there is no commonality of beliefs, only the right and wrong. The opposing viewpoints of the conspiracy theory certainly echo

this view. The mistrust and strong rhetoric is evident between the superpowers. The reason why a centrist view was not located in any significant degree may be that the opposing views are so dogmatic that compromise is a sign of weakness. The centrist position is also affected by the second position cited by Miller.

Miller views the reverse projection phenomenon as a "process whereby a person who occupies a position at a given point along the ideological scale perceives those who occupy any point closer to the center than his own as being on the opposite side of the scale."<sup>44</sup> Any ideological position that is not as intense as the one held by the Viewpoint "A" is seen by Viewpoint "A" as being proponents of Viewpoint "B". In the political arena, this equates to rhetoric and charges of being either a "Communist" or an "Imperialist". This results in the third position of ideologized selectivity.

Decisions relating to foreign policy, responses to terrorism, definitions of terrorism, and data interpretation are impacted by ideologized selectivity. Walter B. Miller adds:

Ideologized selectivity exerts a constant influence in determining which problem areas are granted greatest significance, which projects are supported, what kinds of information are gathered and how research results are analyzed and interpreted.<sup>45</sup>

Viewpoint "B" believers of the conspiracy theory may

inaccurately feel that a surrogate country would not assist in terrorism if economic sanctions were applied. Associated research would then be conducted to support their view. The result of this view is that it leads to the position of informational constriction.

The Viewpoints are selective in their ideology and view information which does not support their position as useless and dangerous. "It is useless because the basic answers...are already given...by the the ideology."<sup>46</sup> The new research is dangerous because it questions truths established by the ideology.<sup>47</sup> The truth of the viewpoints is relative and commitment is intense.

Both positions of the conspiracy theory emphasize catastrophic results if their positions are not supported. The Soviets think the "Imperialist Americans" will try to start a nuclear war and the Americans think the "Communists" are knocking at the door to take over Washington. If the anticipated doomsday results do not occur, Miller states that the proponents believe the warnings of the partisans stopped the catastrophe. The proponents of the conspiracy theory of terrorism also tend to magnify the problem.

In his description of the "magnification of prevalence," Miller argues that the "targets of ideological condemnation are represented as far more prevalent than carefully collected evidence would indicate."<sup>48</sup> Examples



would be the number of terrorist groups and incidents, the amount of support provided revolutionaries, and the number of people killed by terrorists can be inflated by adjusting the definition of operational incidents. This is done in an attempt to discredit the opposition.

The opposition is referred to as being "illogical, irrational, unsupportable, simplistic, internally contradictory, and, if possible, contemptible or ludicrous."<sup>49</sup> The rhetoric and name-calling which occurs between the superpowers and satellite countries supports this position. This distortion is harmful. Miller states such distortion:

impedes the capacity to adequately comprehend and represent positions or points of view which may be complex and extensively developed-a capacity that can be of great value when confronting policy differences based on ideological divergencies.<sup>50</sup>

The article by Walter B. Miller was written as an attempt to get the criminal justice policy makers to understand the different viewpoints of practitioners and theorists and grant them respect and consideration. This would assist in the policy making process in the field. His seven consequences of ideological differences can be justly applied to the conspiracy theory of terrorism in an attempt to understand the actions of both sides. When these are applied to specific actions, rationale becomes apparent even if there is disagreement.

Terrorism has become an instrument of power and the

United States and Soviet involvement in the Libyan incident can be viewed as classic conspiracy theory. The possible motivation for conspiratorialists is reviewed in Walter B. Miller's article, "Ideology and Criminal Justice Policy." Conspiracy theory of terrorism is real and it appears to be valid to those who choose to believe it.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, Politics: Who Gets What, When, and How (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), n.p.

<sup>2</sup> Fred A. Kramer, Dynamics of Public Bureaucracy, 2nd rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Wintrop Publishers, Inc), p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Brian Crozier, The Masters of Power (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), p. 241.

<sup>4</sup> Roberta Goren, The Soviet Union and Terrorism, ed. Jillian Becker (Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Goren, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Goren, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Brian M. Jenkins, International Terrorism: The Other World War (Santa Monica, Ca.: The Rand Corporation, 1985), p. v.

<sup>8</sup> U.S., Department of Justice, Report of the Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1977), p. 421.

<sup>9</sup> Neil C. Livingstone, The War Against Terrorism (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1982), p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> William J. Casey, "International Terrorism: Potent Challenge to American Intelligence," Vital Speeches of the Day, No. 23, 15 Sept. 1985, p. 714.

<sup>11</sup> Livingstone, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> Goren, p. 195.

<sup>13</sup> Goren, p. 195.

<sup>14</sup> The Sacramento Bee, 15 April 1986, Sec. A, p. A12, col. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983, Xerox, n.d., 144.

16 President Ronald Reagan, Department of State Bulletin, Vol. 84 (Washington D.C.: GPO, December 1984), p. 86.

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18 Ellen Laipson, "Libya and the Soviet Union: Alliance at Arm's Length," in The Pattern of Soviet Conduct in the Third World, ed. Walter Laqueur (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983), p. 134.

19 Laipson, p. 133.

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24 Moshe Arens, "Terrorist States," in Terrorism: How The West Can Win, ed. Benjamin Netanyahu (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986), p. 95.

25 Claire Sterling, The Terror Network (1981; rpt. New York: Berkley Books, 1985), pp. 242-243.

26 "TVI Update (As of September 1, 1985)," Terrorism, Violence, Insurgency Journal 6, No. 1 (Summer 1985), 54.

27 Goren, p. 1.

28 Arthur J. Goldberg, "London's Libyan Embassy Shootout: A Case of International Terrorism," in Terrorism: How The West Can Win, ed. Benjamin Netanyahu (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986), p. 144.

29 Livingstone, p. 17.

30 Livingstone, p. 14.

31 Daniel Greene, "State-Backed Criminality Escalates Libyan Crisis," Air Force Times, 21 April 1986, p. 4, col. 1.

32 Greene, col. 5.

33 Barbara Rehm, "U.S. Lays Terrorism to Libya," The Oregonian, 31 December 1985, Sec. A, p. 1, col. 6.

- 34 Greene, p. 12, col. 2.
- 35 Sacramento Bee, 15 April 1986, Sec. A, p. A8, cols. 2-5.
- 36 Sterling, p. 275.
- 37 Wilkinson, p. 179.
- 38 Jenkins, p. vi.
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- 40 Drew Middleton, "Moscow Connection in Mideast Reaffirmed," Air Force Times, 9 June 1986, p. 27, col. 2.
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- 42 Bohlen, cols. 3-4.
- 43 Walter B. Miller, "Ideology and Criminal Justice Policy: Some Current Issues," The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology 64, (1973): 152.
- 44 Miller, p. 152.
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- 47 Miller, p. 153.
- 48 Miller, p. 153.
- 49 Miller, p. 153.
- 50 Miller, p. 153.

## CHAPTER 4

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

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#### Summary

This study is based upon the current literature found within available sources in the United States that addresses the conspiracy theory of terrorism. Significantly more literature is available supporting the Soviet Conspiracy Theory (Viewpoint "B") than Viewpoint "A". It is likely that a large amount of literature supporting the American Conspiracy Theory of terrorism can be found within the Communist societies. The conspiracy theory does not lend itself to empirical analysis because it is based largely upon beliefs and attitudes. It is still an interesting and important theory that may be applied to many other subject areas. The opposing views present similar types of evidence to support their positions.

Viewpoint "A" documents information and interpretations which emphasize the alleged role of the United States, the Central Intelligence Agency, and multi-national business interests in the support of terrorism. The literature supporting this view is presented professionally. This view portrays terrorism as a function of the economic interests

of the capitalistic societies and is fully supported by the government and secret police force (CIA). According to Chomsky and Herman, the United States is accused of involvement in:

frequent displacement of democratic governments and extensive and growing resort to repression, including physical torture, imprisonment, death squads, and mysterious "disappearances," all within the U.S. sphere of influence.<sup>1</sup>

Numerous incidents are documented which lends support to this view. In most cases, the incidents can be traced historically and the reported results portray differences of ideological interpretations between the opposing sides. Although the cited incidents differ, Viewpoint "B" has many similarities to Viewpoint "A".

Viewpoint "B" of the conspiracy theory points toward the Soviet Union, the KGB, and the Communist surrogates as the primary supporters and motivators of terrorism. The accessible literature supporting this view is substantially greater in volume and cites Soviet support in the areas of training, supplies, and financing. Neil Livingstone clarifies the view behind the Soviet support. He argues:

It is usually impossible to view terrorism outside of the context of East-West relations and competition among the superpowers. The USSR and its Eastern bloc allies are, operating largely through surrogates, the chief sponsors and patrons of global terrorism, and they regard this as an effective and economical strategy for undermining the Western democracies and for making gains in the developing world, without running the risk of outright conflict.<sup>2</sup>

Livingstone relates that "the implication is not that a central control room exists in the Kremlin...but rather that the Soviets have been quick to recognize the opportunities ...and to exploit them for their own purposes."<sup>3</sup> This literature is indicative of the rhetoric found to support and refute the competing viewpoints of the conspiracy theory of terrorism. These views are important power sources in the political arena of decision-making.

The contributions of Walter B. Miller to decision-making and conspiracy theory is that he published an article outlining the potential implications of strong ideological attitudes. Miller's work is significant because it provides hypothetical reactions and attitudes that may directly or indirectly alter the rational decision-making process. His work provides a framework to view the process and relate conspiracy theory to the results.

The conspiracy theory of terrorism has been in existence for a long time. It has been generally overlooked and disregarded because it necessitates an understanding of vague terms and operational methods. This study has reached some tentative conclusions regarding the utility of the conspiracy theory.

### Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to conduct a literature review of the conspiracy theory and to attempt to associate



the theory to the decision-making processes. The following conclusions to the study are offered:

1. Evidence exists supporting both the Viewpoint "A" and Viewpoint "B" of the conspiracy theory of terrorism, even though, as Ray Cline and Yonah Alexander reflected, "evidence of international terrorist intervention, while circumstantial and plentiful, is naturally too scrappy, vague, and unconvincingly sourced to hold up in a court of law or even definitively in a court of world opinion." <sup>4</sup> This study is not concerned with "guilt beyond a reasonable doubt," but with "a preponderance of evidence" as determined by both circumstantial and factual evidence.

2. The literature of conspiracy theory, when assessed according to Walter B. Miller's work, indicates strong similarities in the decision-making process of the superpowers when dealing with the subject of terrorism.

3. Terrorism has become a source of power in the international political process.

4. The conspiracy theory of terrorism may not provide the best theory for explaining terrorism, but it has contributed to the operational beliefs and actions of many decision-makers and supporters from both viewpoints.

### Discussion

The proponents of the opposite views of conspiracy theory of terrorism are commonly thought to be at opposite

ends of a terrorism continuum. Herbert McClosky and Dennis Chong believe the opposite ends have several things in common. They indicate that:

Although the conventional view holds that the two camps diverge sharply and belong at opposite ends of the continuum, some observers believe that they resemble each other so closely in certain crucial political and psychological characteristics that to classify them at opposite ends is grossly misleading.<sup>5</sup>

McClosky and Chong refer to work conducted to show similarities and differences between left-wing and right-wing radicals, however, their work can be adapted to the opposing views of the conspiratorialists. According to their work, "although they differ in their choice of allies and enemies, and in their perceptions of certain institutions as hostile or friendly...they share a common style of political thought and employ similar techniques of political engagement."<sup>6</sup> This activity can be attributed to the conspiracy theory of terrorism and the conclusions reached by McClosky and Chong can be appropriately applied to the opposing conspiracy theory proponents.

McClosky and Chong reasoned the following:

1. Both view society as dominated by conspiratorial forces that are working to defeat their respective ideological aims,
2. The degree of their alienation is intensified by the zealous and unyielding manner in which they hold their beliefs,
3. Both camps possess an inflexible psychological and political style characterized by the tendency to view social and political affairs in crude, unambiguous and stereotypical

terms,

4. They see political life as a conflict between 'us' and 'them', a struggle between good and evil played out on a battleground where compromise amounts to capitulation and the goal is total victory,

5. Both are disposed to censor their opponents, to deal harshly with enemies, to sacrifice the well-being even of the innocent in order to serve a "higher purpose."<sup>7</sup>

McClosky and Chong's article helps to clarify the decision-making process described by Miller. Although the superpowers differ sharply in many aspects, they display similarities in the political arena and these similarities are effected by conspiratorial thought. This view is further supported by Thomas Plate and Andrea Darvi in Secret Police: The Inside Story of a Network of Terror. Referring to secret police forces such as the CIA and KGB, they state:

One distinct impression is that the secret police forces, whether of the left or the right, tend to be more alike than different. While the differences among secret police systems are facinating...secret police forces around the world tend to be more or less comparable in organization, structure, operating style, and standard techniques...secret police around the world constitute a true generic class.<sup>8</sup>

It is the similarities, not the differences, which makes the conspiracy theory interesting. The opposing views tend to react based upon similar impetus and the reactions can be calculated in advance. It is this phenomena which holds hope for responsible responses to terrorism. The goal of the recent study by Frank S. Pearson and Neil Alan Weiner was to "point out the implications of the selected theories

and to delineate their similarities."<sup>9</sup> Their study concluded the "major concepts of the theories can be translated into a common theoretical vocabulary."<sup>10</sup> Pearson and Weiner sought to integrate the various theories of criminology. Accordingly, the various theories of terrorism may be ready for integration. The conspiracy theory of terrorism is a theory that cannot be measured, but it can be acknowledged and understood as impacting the decision-making process.

#### Recommendation - Implication For Future Research

Edward Hyams noted that governments have a tendency to overreact to terrorism. He suggests:

All established governments of whatever political persuasion...when attacked by a campaign of terrorism, persist in asserting that their opponents will gain nothing by such methods; but, very consistently, they themselves employ terrorist methods in campaigns of counter-terrorism.<sup>11</sup>

The study of the various theories of terrorism must be coupled with the study of the operational aspects of terrorism. To focus on one and neglect the other would be dangerous and negligent. The conspiracy theory of terrorism may be just an offshoot of other conspiracy theories in the social and political fields. However, it has become one way of attempting to explain the acts of terrorism, the reasons for terrorism, and the anticipated reactions to terrorism.

Many things go into the decision-making process similar to the process which resulted in the American bombing raid

on Libya. Many truths, half-truths, and lies persist in the political arena. The conspiracy theory of terrorism is one part of a larger process. The problem is attempting to measure the significance and validity of the conspiratorial thought.

It becomes a greater problem when the decisions are made based upon tainted input made knowingly or unknowingly by proponents of conspiracy theory and neither side can gain an advantage. Incidents of terrorism increase and "as in war, when neither side prevails, there is a tendency toward escalation."<sup>12</sup> One writer addressed the problem by stating, "conspiratorialists are forced, as they go along, to include ever more and more elements in the single Plot, in order to explain not only its success but the fact that it continues undetected by most people."<sup>13</sup> It is at this point when the terms, right or left, liberal or conservative, democracy or communism, Viewpoint "A" or Viewpoint "B" become a "meaningless distinction at this level of 'analysis' - as meaningless as the difference between reality and illusion."<sup>14</sup>

The conspiracy theory of terrorism needs to be further researched as it relates to practical application and impact upon decision-making processes. The future study should be focused upon the allegations inherent in the opposing viewpoints of conspiracy theory. Is there, or is there not, a conspiratorial campaign employing terrorism by the

Americans or the Soviets designed to perpetuate their ideologies and increase their power in the world?

The literature supports the allegations made by both sides of the theory. Terrorism as a source of political power and its role as a substitute for direct conflict is adequately substantiated. The work of Walter B. Miller and the study by McClosky and Chong indicate strong similarities in the decision-making process. The conspiracy theory of terrorism is a valid theory to many academicians, experts, and practitioners. To others, it is superfluous and trite. It does not explain terrorism and it doesn't support either point of view. The results are not clear, but further research should be conducted to settle the differences. If it is not a valid theory, prove it. If it is valid, substantiate it.

Robert Kupperman and Darrel Trent expressed this view in their discussion of general theories of terrorism. They indicated:

There is widespread belief that above all we need a general theory of terrorism-and that such a theory is possible. But even though at the end of the day we shall not be nearer to such a theory, certain suggestions have emerged that certainly warrant further examination.<sup>15</sup>

This study has attempted to review the conspiracy theory of terrorism and to demonstrate how it may effect the decision-making process. The need for future research into the various theories which attempt to explain terrorism is

obvious. The goal of the research should not be to prove the utility or futility of one theory over another. The goal should be merely to reach the truth.

1 Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism (Boston: South End Press, 1979), p. 41.

2 Neil C. Livingstone, The War Against Terrorism (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1982), p. 12.

3 Livingstone, p. 12.

4 Ray S. Cline and Yonah Alexander, Terrorism: the Soviet Connection (New York: Crane Russak, 1984), p. 19.

5 Herbert McClosky and Dennis Chong, "Similarities and Differences Between Left-Wing and Right-Wing Radicals," in British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 15, Part 3, (July 1985), p. 329.

6 McClosky and Chong, p. 329.

7 McClosky and Chong, pp. 360-361.

8 Thomas Plate and Andrea Darvi, Secret Police: The Inside Story of a Network of Terror (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1981), p. x-xi.

9 Frank S. Pearson and Neil Alan Weiner, "Criminology: Toward an Integration of Criminological Theories," The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology 76, No. 1, 118.

10 Pearson and Weiner, p. 118.

11 Edward Hyams, Terrorists and Terrorism (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1975), p. 9.

12 Bonnie Cordes et al, Trends in International Terrorism, 1982 and 1983 (Santa Monica, Ca.: The Rand Corporation, 1984), p. 50.

13 Garry Wills, "LaRouche As Lonely Hero," Sacramento Bee, 28 April 1986, Sec. B, p. B11, cols. 3-6.

14 Garry Wills, col. 6.

15 Robert Kupperman and Darrel Trent, Terrorism: Threat, Reality, Response (Stanford, Ca.: Hoover Institution Press, 1979), p. xv.



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